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To whom it may concern:

SUBJECT: COUNTRY CONDITIONS IN MEXICO FOR JOURNALISTS AND THE RISKS POSED FOR EMILIO GUTIERREZ

Amnesty International is a movement made up of more than 7 million supporters, with staff that carry out research and campaigns on human rights violations in more than 160 countries around the world. In Mexico, our organization has been documenting human rights violations for at least four decades, with a team of researchers that monitor the situation in the country on a daily basis as well as a local section of staff and members in Mexico dedicated to advocacy and dialogue with the government and civil society. In this respect, I hereby present information on the situation of safety for journalists in Mexico, in light of the pending resolution on the asylum claim of Emilio Gutiérrez, a Mexican journalist currently detained by US Immigrations and Customs Enforcement in El Paso, Texas.

Mexico is experiencing unprecedented levels of violence. The year 2017 registered the highest murder rate in at least two decades, reaching 20.51 per 100,000 inhabitants, according to official figures. The state of Chihuahua, in the north of Mexico, registered a murder rate double this national average, at 41.72 per 100,000. This information is relevant given that Emilio Gutierrez previously worked as a journalist in Chihuahua and denounced death threats which led him to abandon Mexico in 2008 and enter the United States. In 2008 the murder rate in the state of Chihuahua was 59.16 per 100,000.

Journalists in Mexico continue to be threatened, harassed, attacked and killed, and the situation continues to worsen. Mexico is the most dangerous place in the Americas to be a journalist. At least 12 journalists were killed in 2017, the highest number recorded in one year since 2000. In addition, the number of aggressions against journalists has increased during the current presidential administration, with the international organization Article 19 registering 1,986 aggressions against journalists from the end of 2012 to present, while during the former Calderon presidency (2006-2012), there were 1,092 aggressions registered.

In the state of Chihuahua, the number of aggressions against journalists registered by Article 19 decreased between 2011 and 2015, only to pick up significantly in 2016 and 2017, reaching the same high level of aggressions registered in 2009 and 2010.

Furthermore, reporting on the issue of corruption and violence in the state of Chihuahua continues to put the lives of journalists at risk. A recent example is the case of Miroslava Breach, a high profile reporter who denounced the nexus between local authorities and organized crime in the state of Chihuahua, which ultimately led to her murder on 23 March 2017.

Amnesty International also notes that official protection measures for journalists in Mexico have proven inadequate. The federal Mechanism to Protect Human Rights Defenders and Journalists continues to leave journalists under-protected, and a number of journalists have been murdered despite being beneficiaries of security measures from the government. In addition, the early warning mechanisms that have been implemented in recent years in the states of Chihuahua and Veracruz, in response to the situation in these states, have not fundamentally changed the underlying conditions of insecurity for journalists.

Finally, it is important to note that a number of recent killings and aggressions have demonstrated that relocating inside Mexico is not necessarily a sufficient measure to ensure the safety of a journalist. Cases of killings, attacks and threats against journalists have occurred outside of the state where they live and work. This demonstrates the gravity of the situation on a national level.

Please do not hesitate to contact our researchers on Mexico for more information in relation to this letter, using the telephone numbers at the top of this document or on the following email: mexteam@amnesty.org.

Yours sincerely,



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